

Tips to Control Your Fluid Intake

As your kidneys lose the ability to balance the amount of fluid that enters and leaves your body, fluids can build up. Fluid weight gain is often a common problem for many people on dialysis. This handout can help you take in the amount of fluids each day that is right for you.

How much fluid is enough?

The amount of fluid you should drink will depend on your medical situation. Most people on dialysis will need to limit fluid intake to about 4 to 6 cups each day.

To help you measure:

1 ounce of fluid = 30 ml or 30 cc

½ cup or 4 ounces of fluid = 120 ml or 120 cc

1 cup or 8 ounces of fluid = 240 ml or 240 cc

2 cups or 16 ounces of fluid = 480 ml or 480 cc

1 quart or 32 ounces = 4 cups of fluid = 960 cc = about 1 Liter



- To keep track of all of the liquid that you drink each day, use a measuring cup to find out the amount of liquid that your favorite glass or mug holds.
- Until you get used to measuring, keep track of the amount of liquid you drink each day on a sheet of paper or notebook.

What counts as a fluid?

Fluids are foods that are liquid at room temperature. All of these foods count toward your fluid intake:

- Water for drinking and taking medications
- Ice cubes and ice chips
- Coffee and tea
- Sodas, beer, alcohol drinks, lemonade
- Milk, cream, liquid creamer, milk shakes
- Juices, both fruit and vegetable
- Soup and broth
- Popsicles® and frozen fruit bars
- Ice cream, sherbet and sorbets
- Gelatin

What is the proper fluid gain?

At hemodialysis, your weight is measured in kilograms instead of pounds. Each kilogram = 2.2 lbs

Try to limit your fluid gain to no more than 2-3 kilograms (4-6 lbs) between each dialysis treatment.



So, if you drink.....

- 4 cups per day, you will gain 2 lbs or 1 kilogram per day
- 8 cups per day, you will gain 4 lbs or 2 kilograms per day
- Limit high salt foods, so you will have less thirst.
- Take your pills with your mealtime liquids or applesauce or puree fruits as allowed.
- Drink from small glasses and cups.
- Drink only when you are thirsty.
- Weigh yourself daily. You should not gain more than _____ pounds each day.
- Use sour candy or gum to moisten your mouth.
- Add some lemon juice to water or ice. The sour taste will help to quench your thirst.
- Try swishing your mouth with mouthwash when you are thirsty. *Do not swallow it!*
- Use ice cubes instead of liquids. One-cup ice is equal to a ½ cup of water/ juice and will last longer.
- Freeze 20 grapes and eat throughout the day as one of your fruit servings. Try frozen blueberries and pineapple tidbits, fruit cocktail and other recommended fruits.
- Remember that some foods should also be counted as fluids. These include soups, Popsicles®, sherbet, ice cream, yogurt, custard and gelatin.

Why should I be concerned with drinking too much fluid?

The amount of fluid recommended for you, between your dialysis treatments, is

Too much fluid may cause problems like:

- Swollen feet or swollen ankles
- High blood pressure
- Difficulty breathing
- Poor dialysis treatment causing cramping or longer dialysis time



What is my “dry weight”?

- Your dry weight is how much you weigh after all the extra fluid is removed through your dialysis.
- One of the goals of dialysis is to remove the extra fluid at every treatment.
- For every kilogram (2.2 pounds) above your dry weight, you have about 4 cups of extra fluid in your body.
- Too much weight gain between dialysis visits means that you have gained too much fluid weight and you may need to stay on the dialysis machine longer than you expected to remove the extra fluid.
- If you are very thirsty and are having trouble keeping your fluid gains at the recommended amount between treatments, talk to your Dietitians, Nurses and Doctors. We will try to help.



Source: Department of Veterans Affairs
Nutrition and Food Service